

FUJITA

Application No. 10/693,954

September 6, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Currently, claims 1-20 are pending in this application.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103:

Claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Suzuki (U.S. '175) in view of Bokhour (U.S. '333). Applicant traverses this rejection.

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, all of the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. The combination of Suzuki and Bokhour fails to teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. For example, the combination fails to teach or suggest “detecting an outline portion of an image as an outline area, with respect to an area other than the ink line area and the neighboring area in the original image, by performing an outline extraction process for the entire area of the original image except the ink line area and the neighboring area thereof,” as required by independent claim 1 and its dependents. Independent claims 6 and 11 and their respective dependents require similar (but not necessarily identical) limitations. The combination also fails to teach or suggest “detecting an outline area of the original image, the outline area being outside of the ink line area and the neighboring area and having a brightness which differs from an area adjacent to the outline area, by performing an outline extraction process for the entire area of the original image except the ink line area and the neighboring area thereof,” as required by independent claim 12 and its

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dependents. Independent claim 16 and its dependents require similar (but not necessarily identical) limitations.

The Advisory Action makes note of Applicant's previous argument that "Suzuki fails to disclose 'an outline portion being extracted' and 'an outline extraction process being performed for the entire area.'" Consistent with the Examiner's helpful comments in the Advisory Action (e.g., "Examiner would suggest incorporation of said limitations in said claims."), independent claim 1 now recites "detecting an outline portion of an image as an outline area, with respect to an area other than the ink line area and the neighboring area in the original image, by performing an outline extraction process for the entire area of the original image except the ink line area and the neighboring area thereof (emphasis added)." Similar (but not necessarily identical) comments apply to the other independent claims. Applicant submits that the combination of Suzuki and Bokhour fails to teach or suggest these limitations.

New Claim:

New claim 20 has been added to provide additional protection for the invention. New claim 20 requires, *inter alia*, "a third determination mechanism for determining whether or not the pixel to be processed is included in an outline by applying an outline extraction process to the pixel to be processed based on the original image data when the first determination mechanism determines that the pixel to be processed is included in the ink line area and the second determination

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mechanism determines that the pixel to be processed is in the vicinity of the ink line area.” Applicant respectfully submits claim is allowable.

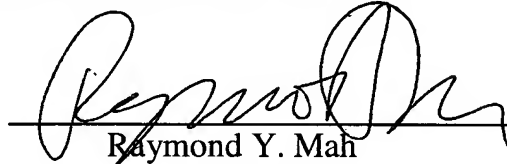
Conclusion:

Applicant believes that this entire application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice to this effect. If the Examiner has any questions or believes that an interview would further prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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